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Security Council

Seventy-second year

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New York

President:	Mr. Alemu	(Ethiopia)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
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	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2017/751)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2017/751)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, and Mr. Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Keating and Mr. Madeira, who are joining this meeting via video-teleconference from Mogadishu.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/751, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Keating.

Mr. Keating: The long-term and immediate challenges facing Somalia remain formidable, be they humanitarian, economic, security or political. The unity of the Council and the solidarity of the international community have been essential to the gradual if fragile progress that is being made.

At my last briefing in March (see S/PV.7905), the humanitarian crisis was deteriorating fast. Thanks to the swift and generous contribution of more than $1 billion for humanitarian action since the beginning of the year, agencies have been able to mount a famine-prevention response reaching over 3 million people per month. The worst of the famine threat has been averted. However, the damage to lives and livelihoods, particularly of women, children and marginalized groups, has been extensive. Approximately 900,000 people have been newly displaced over the past five months, and the risk of famine remains. An imperative for Somalis is to escape the vicious cycle of recurring weather-related shocks. Humanitarian and development partners are coming together to build institutional capacity, strengthen resilience and boost productivity in line with the Secretary-General's new way of working. The Federal Government, supported by the United Nations and the World Bank, is developing plans for a comprehensive post-disaster needs assessment of the impact of the drought and a recovery and resilience framework to reduce the risk of famine.

The peaceful transition of power earlier this year, following the electoral process, generated a sense of hope and a moment of opportunity. The Federal Government remains determined to achieve core objectives, including improving security, notably in Mogadishu, creating jobs and adopting key legislation that will make a difference, but its honeymoon period is over. Somalia's Government is not the first to experience that phenomenon. Immediate political challenges are complicated by ill-defined relationships between the Federal Government and Federal member states, between the executive and the legislative branches of Government, between the newly formed Upper House of the Federal Parliament and the House of the People. Other challenges relate to politicians and power brokers using opportunities to advance their own clan interests or personal ambitions and using tools such as threats of impeachment and motions of no confidence. The key issue is whether the Federal Government will be successful in managing those constituencies and in preventing them from threatening progress on core objectives on the stability of the State.

The strong working relationship between the President and the Prime Minister and the determination of the Federal Government to deliver tangible economic and security benefits for the population are very encouraging. The immediate issues that are currently generating strains in relations between State institutions include the controversy over the transfer to Ethiopia of a well-known Ogaden National Liberation Front figure and the reverberations of the Government's determination to maintain a neutral posture in the dispute among important Gulf partners. They also include simmering disputes around the country, including in HirShabelle and the impeachment of the state President there, the political standoff in

Galmudug, where the state President has been unable to advance power-sharing and reconciliation talks with Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, and tensions in the southern part of HirShabelle.

If the are unresolved, those could undermine the gains made so far in the state-formation process. The United Nations is working closely with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other partners to play a constructive role, including to support the HirShabelle elections. A resolution is needed to key issues that will define the Federal State, including the division of powers, and agreements on revenue- and resource-sharing between Federal and state Governments. They also include the structure of the judiciary, the status of the Banadir region, in which the national capital is located, and the formalization of the status of civil Federal member states.

Advancing the review of the provisional Federal Constitution is therefore a priority. Useful consultations are taking place to ensure an inclusive review process, although the respective roles and responsibilities of core institutions still need to be clarified. The next step is a national consultative conference, scheduled in October, that should agree on a two-year master plan. Significant progress has been made on preparing and adopting priority laws, such as the telecommunications bill and the human rights commission act. Completing the constitutional review is also critical for the successful holding of the 2020-2021 elections. The legislative framework and agreement on the electoral model are urgently needed. Those will help dispel scepticism as to whether Somalia can move away from the so-called 4.5 model to universal suffrage.

The crisis in relations between Gulf countries has had an impact on Somalia. Anticipated investments and revenue streams have not been forthcoming, and the Federal Government's declaration of neutrality, while receiving widespread support, has not gone down well with certain constituencies. The Council's continued support is needed to protect Somalia from the potentially destabilizing effects of geopolitical rivalries. Current political turbulence in Somalia must be taken seriously, but should not obscure the steady, if uneven, progress that the country is making.

Somalia has great economic potential, whether in agro-business, livestock, fisheries, trade or renewable and other energy sources, as well as highly entrepreneurial men and women, both in the country and among the diaspora. Unleashing that potential depends upon the success of reaching a political settlement between the Government and the private sector, and upon Government policies and capacities to implement them. A critical requirement will be raising revenues, whether from domestic sources or by accessing concessional finance. Advancing arrears clearance and reaching a decision point on the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative are essential and will require both the strengthening of public financial management and international action. The support of the Council could make a decisive difference.

In the meantime, Somalia remains heavily dependent upon aid. Both traditional and non-traditional donors, including many serving on the Council, have provided generous assistance. The Prime Minister is appealing for immediate budget support to allow the Government to deliver on jobs and security and to strengthen relations with Federal member states by means of fiscal transfers. The United Nations and the World Bank have collaborated closely to devise a surge support package for public works. I urge partners to follow the European Union, Norway and Sweden's lead to use a recurrent cost and reform financing facility to that end.

Security has improved in Mogadishu as a result of the Federal Government's Mogadishu stabilization plan. That deserves more support. However, Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat and the overall security situation in the country remains volatile. Addressing insecurity and the continuing threat from Al-Shabaab require vigorous implementation of the national security architecture agreement and of the comprehensive approach to security. International partners have now been identified and have begun work on each of the four strands of the comprehensive approach to security, namely, enabling the effective operations of the African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and implementing the transition from AMISOM; strengthening Somalia's security sector, including policing and maritime areas; stabilization; and, lastly, preventing and countering violent extremism. Securing predictable funding for AMISOM is a top priority. The Council members' own deliberations in Addis Ababa last week illuminated the key issues. The Secretary-General's report on funding for AMISOM, due in November, will provide an opportunity to explore and propose funding options, while taking into account the limitations of voluntary contributions.

That should be anchored in a common narrative on Somalia's security needs in the next five years — one shared by the Federal Government, the African Union, the United Nations and the main investors in Somalia's security, including the European Union (EU) and other major bilateral partners. That needs to build upon the recommendations of the joint AU-United Nations review of AMISOM, the outcome of the operational readiness assessment of the Somali National Army currently under way, and progress in implementing the national security architecture agreement. A successful transition of responsibility for security from AMISOM to Somali security institutions requires adequate and coherent support for both AMISOM and Somalia's security forces, as well as clarity about the role of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, as transition gets under way. Sustained transition requires that key political and operational conditions be met. AMISOM continues to play an indispensable role in protecting Somalia's progress and people. Somali security forces are not yet ready to shoulder full responsibilities. Funding for AMISOM and the Somali security forces must complement one another.

Conflict resolution, local reconciliation and a reduction in violence are essential to progress and to reducing both human and financial costs. The United Nations is working with IGAD, the African Union, the EU and other partners to strengthen national conflict-resolution capacities, as well as to facilitate agreements in specific locations. An example of that has been in Galkayo, where real progress is being made.

In conclusion, Somalia faces immediate crises, as well as basic structural problems, some of which are worrisome in terms of their ability to derail political progress. Providing practical support and political encouragement to the Somali leadership, both at the Federal and state level, will continue to be essential. Allow me to end by thanking Council members for their united and steady commitment to Somalia and continued support to the United Nations, me and my team.

The President: I thank Mr. Keating for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to this briefing on the ongoing situation in Somalia. I bring greetings to the Security Council from the African Union (AU) Chairperson, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

Since 17 May, when I last addressed the Council (see S/PV.7942), there have been significant diplomatic, political and security developments that have had a significant and varying impact on Somalia. Thanks to the combined efforts and proactive mobilization of the Federal Government of Somalia, innovative fieldwork by humanitarian actors and the generous contributions of international partners, this year Somalia has been able to avert what could have been a repeat of the 2011 catastrophic drought.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has worked closely with its partners, collaborating under the umbrella of the Drought Operations Coordination Centre, to identify challenges and provide practical assistance for an effective humanitarian response through information sharing, AMISOM-uniformed personal escorts and protection for United Nations humanitarian assessment missions in Adado, the provision of security for World Food Programme airdrops in Hudur and civic engagements in areas under AMISOM deployments, food and non-food item distribution to internationally displaced persons' camps in Mogadishu and the coordinated airlift of 18 metric tons of nutritional food supplies to Bulo Burte. However, the situation continues to require close monitoring and adaptation, as problems still loom over many places in Somalia. Any neglect might result in a recurrence of a drought, with gloomy consequences.

The AU-United Nations joint review took place in May. Each report that was adopted by the African Union Peace and Security Council on 12 July presented recommendations for key political and security resourcing for the work of AMISOM so that the Mission can complete its transition and start its drawdown.

Since June, Somalia has been affected by the Gulf crisis between a Saudi Arabia-led coalition and Qatar. I will not go into further detail, but I will say that we are happy the anticipated disruptions of governance and the economy, as a result of the crisis, have so far been contained. We are not sure what is in store for tomorrow.

In order to deliver on its political agenda, the Federal Government of Somalia aims to draft 19 pieces of legislation that will be forwarded to the Federal Parliament for debate and approval as part of its current session. That process may eventually face challenges related to time constraints. After concluding stakeholder consultations in preparation for a nationwide constitutional review process, the Minister

for Constitutional Affairs is laying the foundations for political and constitutional reforms in the country, to take place ahead of the one-person, one-vote elections in 2020.

A joint constitutional review parliamentary committee has been established. AMISOM supports the country's political road map on a transfer of power by 2021, which resonates well with the need to meet requisite political conditions for an effective implementation of the AMISOM exit strategy.

In a related development, Somalia's National Independent Electoral Commission completed its drafting of a strategic plan for the 2020-2021 election. However, budgeting difficulties are already emerging as a major challenge in the implementation of its priority activities. The formation and consolidation of regional institutional frameworks and the enactment of requisite legislation at the regional and state levels will be key in addressing issues related to regional and political instability — what we are witnessing in HirShabelle, the south-west and many other places — and in finding a lasting solution to the protracted dialogue and ending dialogue between the state Government and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a. A lasting solution to those challenges would go a long way in facilitating the implementation of the AMISOM mandate and fulfilling its conditions-based exit strategy.

AMISOM continues to contribute to enhancing security in Somalia, despite violent asymmetrical Al-Shabaab activities. The prime targets of Al-Shabaab's indiscriminate attacks remain the Federal Government, AMISOM and the Somalia national security forces forward-operating bases in all sectors.

Improvised explosive devices (IED) remain Al-Shabaab's weapon of choice. In the period under consideration, there were a total of 139 improvised explosive device incidents in AMISOM areas of operation alone. Thirty-two IED explosions were averted as a result of action taken by AMISOM teams to identify and neutralize those devices. Despite the increase in attacks, AMISOM is responding appropriately to IED threats, as the identification rate of such explosive devices has increased considerably. Nevertheless, Somali civilians remain the main casualties of treacherous Al-Shabaab IED attacks.

From May to June, the Government implemented the Mogadishu stabilization force, which was built using joint Somali security forces, which, to a great extent, contributed to a peaceful holy month of Ramadan. The public appreciated the steps taken by the Government, which was supported by AMISOM and partners. Mogadishu is much safer today than it was yesterday.

Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab is mobilizing efforts to regain initiative through its Amniyat cell network in Mogadishu. They must be effectively dissuaded from continuing that endeavour — through a robust intelligence-collection capability and action. Elsewhere there are varying levels of insecurity, especially in the country's hotspots of Galmudug state and the Hiraan and HirShabelle regions. On the other hand, the security situation in Gaalkacyo is promising, following the establishment of a 100-troop-strong stabilization and law enforcement joint police force and after progress in the political dialogue between the Galmudug and Puntland states' Presidents of May 2017, and AMISOM and UNSOM police collaborative training efforts. The operations in Juba corridor have witnessed the Somali National Army and the Jubaland security forces taking the lead, supported by AMISOM troops and partners to implement their commitments to degrading Al-Shabaab before AMISOM starts its drawdown.

In response to the presidential amnesty decision with regard to Al-Shabaab militant elements who renounce violence and extremist ideologies, AMISOM and the Federal Government of Somalia saw a steady increase in the number of defectors from Al-Shabaab from May to August 2017. In that period, a total of 47 Al-Shabaab militants surrendered to various Somali regional authorities. More Al-Shabaab elements have expressed their intention to defect and hand themselves over to the Government. There is therefore a need to help create conducive conditions for that process to continue and thrive. The fact that a prominent former leader of Al-Shabaab, Mr. Mukhtar Robow, handed himself over to the Federal Government on 13 August is very telling.

In order to address the recruitment of children into Al-Shabaab, AMISOM, along with other international partners, participated in the development of the 2017-2018 work plan of the child protection unit at the Minister of Defence, with a focus on children associated with armed conflict.

AMISOM, working closely with the Federal Government of Somalia and international partners, is pressing ahead with the implementation of the commitments made at the 11 May London Conference

on the national security architecture and the new security pact, the recommendations of the AU-United Nations joint review, the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council of 12 July communiqué on AMISOM, and resolution 2372 (2017) on the mandate of AMISOM until elections are held.

On 2 July, on the margins of the AU Summit, the a ministerial meetiong of AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries was held in Addis Ababa to discuss the AU-United Nations joint review recommendations, especially as they relate to the AMISOM drawdown and further related tasks. Given the unpredictable and unsustainable resource mobilization for AMISOM after June 2018, and considering the challenges at hand, the meeting agreed to commission an AU technical expert team to come up with options for the AU in the light of the recommendations by the AU-United Nations joint review of AMISOM's exit strategy.

In order to identify the most effective ways of implementing the recommendations of the AU-United Nations joint review on AMISOM, a joint African Union Mission in Somalia and the Federal Government of Somalia conference on the transitioning of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces was held from 24 to 28 July in Mogadishu. That conference of security experts from both sides provided a platform where AMISOM and the Somali Federal Government forces deliberated on the transitioning imperatives. The conference discussed the handover and takeover of AMISOM's and Somali security forces' forward-operating bases in order to release 1,000 AMISOM troops for expanded military operations before the commencement of the drawdown in December.

The Federal Government of Somalia outlined its priorities, including the need to conduct an operational readiness assessment of Somali national security forces and forward-operating bases as a first step during the transition, as well as no the need to empower the Somali national security forces through training, mentoring, infrastructure, equipment, sustainment and mobility — if those forces are to gradually and effectively fully take over security responsibilities of the country from AMISOM.

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Kheyre launched the Federal Government of Somalia's operational readiness assessment conference on 15 August in Mogadishu. The Federal Government of Somalia-led exercise, with the active participation of AMISOM, the United Nations, international partners and the Federal member states, is aligned with resolution 2372 (2107) and the aims and objectives of the comprehensive approach to security. Once it is completed, it is expected to yield a very credible picture of the current shape, size, capacities and state of health of the Somali national security forces — including their number — and to provide key steps to be undertaken for a responsible conditions-based transition of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces. That exercise is essential if we really want to undertake a transition that can preserve the gains so far with our joint material, financial and human effort.

AMISOM police has provided support to the ongoing verification of Somali police force strength. The exercises are still inconclusive. As a follow-up to the Federal Government/AMISOM conference on transitioning of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Federal Government of Somalia in August, AMISOM and Somali national security forces commanders held a planning session for joint coordinated operations for the rest of 2017 and beyond to disrupt, degrade and contain Al-Shabaab and other armed groups, protect the population centres, open and secure main supply routes and undertake a realistic agreement on the handover of some forward-operating bases in Somalia.

As the Security Council is aware, the University of Mogadishu has already been handed over to the Somalis. The Somalis are expected to take over the Academy and four other operating bases. But, given the resources, we will not hand over those positions unless and until the Somalis themselves tell us that they are ready to take them. Meanwhile, in Addis Ababa, a few days ago, on 5 September, the Military Operations Coordination Committee for the African Union Mission in Somalia held its twenty-fourth meeting, at which it agreed on a way forward to implementing resolution 2372 (2017) in terms of an initial reduction, by 1,000 troops, of AMISOM's military personnel by December, as well as on AMISOM's new tasks. That exercise has already begun. We have identified the numbers of soldiers that will have to be cut from each contingent. The Committee also agreed to establish a team of experts to work on options, including a detailed plan for AMISOM's exit from Somalia in case the plan agreed on both in London and through the Joint Review

committee is not provided with the resources it needs for effective implementation.

The Security Council has stressed the importance of enhancing the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of AMISOM's financing. On 22 August, the Head of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia briefed potential donors on the status of the United Nations Trust Fund for AMISOM and the Somali National Army ahead of a donor conference scheduled for September. Of the $94.6 million raised for AMISOM through the Trust Fund, only $388,593 is available as uncommitted funds. Of the $52.2 million raised for the Somali National Army also through the Trust Fund, a balance of $3.8 million is available for the 10,600 troops who are supposed to operating alongside AMISOM.

Under the structures agreed on in London and followed by the United Nations-AU Joint Review, the role of strand 1 — of which AMISOM, with the Federal Government of Somalia, is co-leader — is to identify, organize, plan and execute activities aimed at mobilizing a concrete, commensurate, predictable and sustainable flow of material, technical and financial resources that will enable AMISOM, in close cooperation, coordination and complementarity with the Somali national security forces and partners, to undertake effective operations to further disrupt and destroy Al-Shabaab and other armed groups; protect population centres and enable reconciliation processes; open and secure main supply routes; support the capacity-building of the Somali national security forces, at various levels; facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance; support the speedy restoration and extension of State authority; and implement a gradual, conditions-based transition of security responsibilities from AMISOM to Somali institutions in a manner that ensures that the gains made against Al-Shabaab so far are not reversed.

In line with the comprehensive-approach security provisions and the national security architecture, that will entail a gradual strategic shift in AMISOM's operating methods from a leading to a supporting role, through our transitional planning, so that the Somalis can increasingly assume responsibility and play a greater leadership role in the building, delivery and sustainment of an environment of peace, security and enhanced stability in Somalia. It will also entail developing options and modalities through which predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM can be effectively assured.

In conclusion, I have to insist that such predictable funding is central to AMISOM's ability to remain in Somalia and to the ability of both AMISOM and the AU to honour their obligations under resolution 2372 (2017). It is essential for us to be able to undertake the operations expected of us with responsibility, honour and in full respect for human life. The alternative is very gloomy. We may be forced to reconsider all our commitments if that funding is not available.

The President: I thank Mr. Madeira for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay would like to thank Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, and Mr. Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia, for their detailed briefings.

Uruguay welcomes the renewed momentum generated by the London Conference on Somalia on 11 May, which will be key to various issues in the political process. We particularly appreciate the significant progress that has been made in the constitutional review process, with the presentation by the Federal Ministry of Constitutional Affairs to the international community of a preliminary comprehensive master plan aimed at completing the review within two years. Also at the London Conference, the Federal Government of Somalia committed to holding universal elections in 2021 and to establishing an electoral legal framework by the end of 2018.

In relation to those commitments, Uruguay commends the National Independent Electoral Commission for finalizing its five-year strategic plan for the period 2017 to 2021, which includes details of the electoral operations to be undertaken as well as a timeline for a constitutional referendum and universal elections. We consider it essential to ensure that Somalia moves towards positive change through reconciliation, reaffirming support to its sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity, so that it can become democratic, stable and prosperous.

Despite some improvements that have resulted from security measures taken by the Federal Government

of Somalia, and the continued efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia, the security situation in Mogadishu remains volatile. Uruguay condemns the continuing problems posed by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, which is the main threat to peace and security in Somalia and which remains latent in the central and southern regions of the country despite the steps that have taken to combat it. Uruguay is particularly concerned about Al-Shabaab's readiness to resort to violence against civilians and humanitarian workers to hinder relief efforts. Progress on security-sector reform is urgently needed, and it is vital that the Federal Government of Somalia be the one to take ownership and lead the process.

Uruguay recognizes that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) remains essential to guaranteeing security in Somalia in the medium term. The transition of AMISOM must be organized and supported in such a way as to mark the end of the international security presence in Somalia, without squandering the achievements of the past 10 years, as the Secretary-General rightly states in his report (S/2017/751).

Uruguay again emphasizes the need to protect civilian populations, especially women, children and the elderly. It encourages the Federal Government of Somalia to seek mediation and stability, especially in areas where access to supplies and humanitarian aid is vital. We are also interested in seeing respect for the civil rights of Somali women, with a view to ensuring their full participation in the country's political life.

Although all children associated with Al-Shabaab captured in Puntland have been released, the prison sentences of 40 of the children have not yet been rescinded. Uruguay joins the call made by the Secretary-General, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and UNICEF and urges the authorities of Puntland to facilitate the liberation of these children and to continue working with the United Nations on their reintegration.

Uruguay remains alarmed by cases of sexual violence against internally displaced women and girls living in settlements for internally displaced persons. It is essential to improve the legal framework, the systems for the protection of human rights and the capacity and legitimacy of institutions to help combat impunity, improve accountability for human rights violations and thereby encourage reconciliation.

The President: I thank Mr. Bermúdez for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the representative of Somalia.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): It is a great honour to be addressing the Security Council today on behalf of Somalia. I am delighted to be sharing our experiences with our key partners, all of whom have stood by our nation and our people in our greatest period of need.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and his team, both in New York and in Somalia, for their committment to peace, stability and prosperity in Somalia.

As the Council is aware, Somalia successfully concluded a long and complicated election process on 8 February. That day, representatives of the Somali people voted for change and a new direction for our country when they elected President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo. We are also aware of the enormous public support received by the Federal Government following the election. However, we should be very aware of the high expectations of the Somali people following the election of President Farmajo and the subsequent appointment of Prime Minister Hassan Ali Kheyre, in the areas of improving security and providing basic services such as health and education. Although the Federal Government is working tirelessly to meet everyone's expectations, the immediate hope is to gradually improve the lives of our citizens.

Despite the enormous challenge we face, Somalia is striving for lasting security to ensure that our country may remain at peace with itself and with the global community. We believe that the only way for Somalia to fully recover is to strengthen its democratic institutions. To that end, President Farmajo's Government will spare no effort in working towards the promise at the heart of his election campaign to fight Somalia's three major enemies: terrorism, corruption and poverty.

The Federal Government focuses on getting the politics right. We believe that good politics must be inclusive, participatory, vibrant and practiced on a level playing field. In that regard, the Federal Government is committed to solidifying the federal system of governance, which has only been in place since 2004. Our overall vision is to achieve a strong and cooperative union that works for all Somali people

and enhances equity and good governance. Thankfully, we are a step closer to that objective, as illustrated by the historic formation of the new National Security Council, which includes Federal member states. The National Security Council is a platform for dialogue not only on security issues, but on broader matters of national importance too.

The Federal Government and Federal member states, along with other stakeholders, are currently engaged in an in-depth discussion on matters of national importance, including a dialogue on the sharing of natural and national resources. This and other issues will be discussed in the context of the constitutional review process. The leaders of Somalia recognize that the Constitution is a document that binds them together and serves as the foundational text upon which future decisions are built.

Security remains paramount for the Federal Government. The new national security architecture and the security pact provide the tools we need to strengthen the Somali National Army and introduce an improved policing model. Together with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), we are confident that we can defeat Al-Shabaab in the next couple of years. Once we recover the remaining territories and secure supply routes, we will stabilize the country by building local administrations in collaboration with the Federal member states. We believe that communities are best placed to collaborate with the local, state and Federal Governments to stabilize the country.

However, the Federal Government cannot defeat Al-Shabaab without the necessary tools. For far too long, our security forces have been in combat with terrorist groups using the same light weapons — mostly AK-47s. Despite the bravery of our men and women in uniform, we were locked in asymmetrical battles with the terrorists. Without AMISOM forces, who are supplied with heavy weaponry, we would not have been able to defeat Al-Shabaab. The long-standing arms embargo on Somalia severely restricts our ability to procure heavy weapons, despite the partial lifting of the embargo in 2013. The time has come for Somalia to be granted access to qualitatively better weapons than the terrorists. In that regard, we are asking this organ, the Security Council, to consider and develop a clearly defined road map to grant the full lifting of the arms embargo. That would include improvements to our weapons management and our command-and-control systems.

In the Military Operations Coordination Committee meeting held on 5 September in Addis Ababa, AMISOM troop-contributing countries agreed to reduce troop numbers, as envisaged in resolution 2372 (2017). AMISOM will start planning for exit before May 2018 and is likely to complete its withdrawal in May 2018, if there is no predictable and sustainable funding arrangement beyond that date. My Government and the people of Somalia are grateful for the sacrifices made by AMISOM over the past 10 years to help to restore peace in Somalia.

AMISOM has done a great job. However, the Somali National Army (SNA) and the Somalia National Security Forces (SNSF) are still faced with many challenges, including a general lack of capacity and the effect of the arms embargo. The SNA and SNSF are not ready to take over security responsibilities in Somalia and the premature withdrawal of AMISOM in May 2018 may be a recipe for disaster. It is crucial that AMISOM be provided with predictable and sustainable funding beyond 31 May 2018.

When it comes to the assistance we have received in the security sector from our friends, we are grateful to all partners for their unwavering and sustained support over the years. Many provide financial support, while others provide technical and logistical support. One partner I would like to dedicate special gratitude to is AMISOM. Its peacekeeping forces have been working with us for the past 10 years — much longer than anyone expected. During that time, they have sacrificed many soldiers in the quest to help Somalia defeat Al-Shabaab and rebuild our security sector.

A vital element of rebuilding our security apparatus is to substantially improve coordination among international partners on the security front. We, the Federal Government of Somalia, welcome the genuine attempt to address this fundamental problem through the creation of the Comprehensive Assistance to Security group. This group, in close collaboration with the National Security Office, must end duplicity and fragmentation in the security-support sector. On our side, the National Security Council is designed to do the same.

For too long, the conventional wisdom has been that Somalia is a problem to fix and the people have become a perfect example due of humanitarian breakdown to the failure of the State to do its job. Today the Federal Government of Somalia is committed to seizing this

golden opportunity and to nurturing and delivering better service — a better, stronger and more prosperous Somalia led by the hopes and aspirations of its people. This is the best way to continue the process of changing the prevailing narrative.

Mr President, it is with your assistance and your support of the Federal Government-led security iniative that the darkest chapter of Somali history will come to a close. The Somali people are hopeful and their Government aims to meet their expectations with action.

As we are also aware, the Gu rainy season, which was between March and June, was late, in some areas was below the average and in many parts of Somalia resulted in an elevated risk of famine. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affaris estimated some time in February or March that 3.2 million people needed immediate assitance. While the war has been averted thanks to the help of our partners, the threat of famine has still persisted in the second half of this year. The Federal Government of Somalia remains extremely concerned about the humanitarian crisis. We appeal again to our international partners to help by providing us with additional funding to sustain the current level of humanitarian response and save the lives of many Somalis.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.